

XXXVI.—*Note on Scaphirhynchus Fedtschenkoi*.

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ICHTHYOLOGISTS will thankfully acknowledge the service done to them by the Editors of this Journal in having rendered the interesting discovery of a species of *Scaphirhynchus* in Central Asia accessible to them by the foregoing translation. It is true that the original Russian text is accompanied by a plate representing the fish; but more than one ichthyologist would have failed to recognize from it the close affinity of the Asiatic species to the American, as maintained by Prof. Kessler, and would have been rather inclined to regard the new form as the type of a distinct genus. In the figure the rows of scutes are by no means so well marked and so distinctly represented as they are described in the text; and I have still some doubts whether this is an effect produced by the draughtsman or whether they are in reality more deeply imbedded in the general integuments than is the case in the American species.

However, a comparison of Prof. Kessler's description with that of *S. plotyrhynchus* by Heckel (which has served as model of the former) shows clearly that both fishes are most closely allied species of the same genus. The most remarkable difference is in the extent of the dorsal and anal fins, which is much greater in *S. Fedtschenkoi*, and combined with a shortening of the tail. But this difference finds a parallel in the species of *Acipenser*.

Prof. Kessler (in a part of the paper not reprinted) compares the importance of this discovery to that of *Ceratodus*. In this I cannot agree with him, and I would rather find an analogous case in the discovery of *Psephurus gladius* in the Yantsekiang. Indeed, after the discovery of this latter species, that of a *Scaphirhynchus* in Asia might have been foreseen, just as I anticipate with confidence the discovery of a Ganoid in Borneo. But nobody, in the present state of knowledge, could have imagined the presence of a Dipnoous form in Australia. The discovery of a living *Ceratodus* opened a new vista into the affinities of recent and extinct fishes, whilst that of *Scaphirhynchus Fedtschenkoi* is only an additional interesting item of the series of instances by which the close affinity of the North-American, North-Asiatic, and European faunas is proved.